



The J-Scope

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Military Security Force Soldier Receives Combat Action Badge

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Joint Staff Public Affairs

WASHINGTON, June 5, 2006—Within a blink of an eye an improvised explosive device (IED) and small arms fire, along with the evasive actions to secure and evacuate Ambassador Paul Bremmer on Dec. 6, 2003, changed the deployment of SGT Eric Lewis as a member of the Ambassador's personal security detail in Baghdad.

The actions of Lewis led to the sergeant, now a member of the Joint Staff Military Security Force, being presented the Combat Action Badge by the Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth Preston during an awards ceremony May 30, 2006 in the sergeant major's office.

The Combat Action Badge is awarded to any Soldier who personally engaged the enemy, or are engaged by the enemy during combat operations without regard to branch or Military Occupation Specialty (MOS.) The award doesn't require a Soldier to be assigned to a combat arms unit, a unit organized to conduct close or offensive combat operations, or performing offensive combat operations. The justification for the award is written not to award all Soldiers who serve in a combat zone or imminent danger area, but rather those who actually engage the enemy.

Preston and Lewis served together in Iraq during 2003. Preston was the 5th Corps Command Sgt. Major while Lewis was a Team Leader in the 170th Military Police Company, which was operationally controlled by the 18th Military Police Brigade, a unit under the purview of Preston.



Sergeant Eric Lewis receives the Army Combat Action Badge from Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth Preston on May 30, 2006. Lewis received the award for his actions while deployed to Iraq in 2003. Department of Defense photo by Gregory Jones

“This is a great opportunity to recognize the contributions of Sergeant Lewis on the Global War on Terror,” Preston said. “Soldiers of the 18th Military Police Brigade supported a huge mission of owning the city of Baghdad with its 5.5 million people and helping the Iraqi Police Force stand up.”

Preston said the 170th Military Police Company was assigned as the convoy security detail for the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and Ambassador Bremer, which performed their missions flawlessly and always maintained their professionalism.

On the evening of the ambush, the Ambassador was leaving Baghdad International Airport to go back to the CPA after a meeting with Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld.

Lewis said the convoy was about 2 miles from the CPA when the attack occurred. Lewis was riding in the fifth armored vehicle in the convoy directly behind the Ambassador’s vehicle. The ambassador’s vehicle sustained a direct hit by the IED explosion and Lewis’ vehicle received minor damage from fragmentation.

Without hesitation, the convoy sent a situation report to the Military Police Company’s headquarters and coordinated the extraction of the Ambassador to safety. Lewis’ vehicle and another military vehicle within the convoy began evacuation procedures to escort Ambassador Bremer out of the area. Other vehicles in the convoy set up a security perimeter in order to return to the CPA compound safely. The security detail engaged the Iraqi insurgents with small arms in order to protect the convoy and move to safety.

During the entire event, which Lewis said took 20 minutes, no injuries were sustained to the Ambassador or Soldiers in the convoy. Three of the seven vehicles received the blunt of the IED blast. One of the M114 HMMWV, up armored armament carrier, and a Armored Security Vehicle had all four tires blown out and shrapnel was found through the right side of the vehicle.

During the ceremony Lewis thanked the Sergeant Major of the Army for presiding over the ceremony and everyone in attendance.

“It is not everyday a Soldier meets with the Sergeant Major of the Army let alone receives an award from him. This is the highlight of my military career.”



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